



***Substitute Senate Bill No. 912***

***Public Act No. 17-41***

***AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STAFF  
QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATORS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2017*):

(a) As used in sections 10-16o to 10-16r, inclusive, 10-16u, 17b-749a and 17b-749c:

(1) "School readiness program" means a nonsectarian program that (A) meets the standards set by the Office of Early Childhood pursuant to subsection (b) of this section and the requirements of section 10-16q, and (B) provides a developmentally appropriate learning experience of not less than four hundred fifty hours and one hundred eighty days for eligible children, except as provided in subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

(2) "Eligible children" means children three and four years of age and children five years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible to enroll in school and will attend a school readiness program pursuant to section 10-16t;

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(3) "Priority school" means a school in which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations, excluding such a school located in a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p or in a former priority school district receiving a grant pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and, on and after July 1, 2001, excluding such a school in a transitional school district receiving a grant pursuant to section 10-16u;

(4) "Severe need school" means a school in a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p or in a former priority school district in which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;

(5) "Accredited" means accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a Head Start on-site program review instrument or a successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations, or otherwise meeting such criteria as may be established by the commissioner, unless the context otherwise requires;

(6) "Year-round" means fifty weeks per year, except as provided in subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

(7) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Early Childhood;

(8) "Office" means the Office of Early Childhood; [and]

(9) "Seeking accreditation" means a school readiness program seeking accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or a Head Start on-site program review instrument or successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations, or attempting to meet criteria as may be established by the commissioner; [.] and

(10) "Concentration in early childhood education" means a program of study in early childhood education, including, but not limited to,

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early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development.

(b) (1) The office shall be the lead agency for school readiness. For purposes of this section and section 10-16u, school readiness program providers eligible for funding from the office shall include local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, family resource centers and providers of child care centers, as defined in section 19a-77, Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that meet such standards established by the commissioner. The office shall establish standards for school readiness programs. The standards may include, but need not be limited to, guidelines for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, including preliteracy development, lesson plans, parent involvement, staff qualifications and training, transition to school and administration. The office shall develop age-appropriate developmental skills and goals for children attending such programs. The commissioner, in consultation with the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the Commissioners of Education and Social Services and other appropriate entities, shall develop a professional development program for the staff of school readiness programs.

(2) For purposes of this section:

(A) Prior to July 1, [2017] 2018, "staff qualifications" means there is in each classroom an individual who has at least the following: (i) A childhood development associate credential or an equivalent credential issued by an organization approved by the commissioner and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally accredited; (ii) an associate

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degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an institution; (iii) a four-year degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an institution; [or] (iv) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or special education; (v) an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited; or (vi) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited;

(B) From July 1, [2017] 2018, until June 30, [2020] 2021, "staff qualifications" means that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children (I) hold [(I)] certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education, [or (II) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education, including, but not limited to, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development, from an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and regionally accredited, provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood,] (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to section 2 of this act, (III) hold at least a bachelor's degree with a concentration in

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early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, or (IV) satisfy the requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection, and (ii) such remaining individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children hold an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education [including, but not limited to, an associate degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development,] from an institution of higher education [(I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II)] that is regionally accredited; [ provided such associate degree program is approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood;] and

(C) On and after July 1, [2020] 2021, "staff qualifications" means that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program, one hundred per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children (i) hold [(i)] certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education, [or (ii) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education, including, but not limited to, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally accredited, provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood] (ii) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to subdivision (2) of section 2 of this act, (iii) hold at least a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is

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regionally accredited, or (iv) satisfy the requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection.

(3) Any individual with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, who, on or before June 30, 2015, is employed by an early childhood education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program shall be considered to meet the staff qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection. No such early childhood education program shall terminate any such individual from employment for purposes of meeting the staff qualification requirements set forth in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(4) Any individual with [a] an associate degree or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or an associate degree or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, other than [those bachelor's degrees specified in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection] an associate degree or a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education, may submit documentation concerning such degree for review and assessment by the office as to whether such degree has a sufficient concentration in early childhood education so as to satisfy the requirements set forth in [said] subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(5) Any individual with an [associate's] associate degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (A) accredited

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by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (B) regionally accredited, who has been employed in the same early childhood education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program since 1995 shall be considered to meet the staff qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection until June 30, 2025. On and after July 1, 2025, such individual shall hold a childhood development associate credential or an equivalent credential, described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of this subsection, or otherwise meet the staff qualifications required under subparagraph (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection. Any such individual who terminates his or her employment with such early childhood education program on or before June 30, 2025, and accepts a position at another early childhood education program accepting state funds for spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program shall submit documentation of such individual's progress toward meeting the staff qualification requirements set forth in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection in a manner determined by the office.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2017*) The Office of Early Childhood, upon receipt of a proper application and in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, shall issue an early childhood teacher credential to any person who holds (1) an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, provided such associate degree program is approved by (A) the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education, and (B) the Office of Early Childhood, or (2) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by (A) the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office

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of Higher Education, and (B) the Office of Early Childhood. Any early childhood teacher credential issued pursuant to subdivision (1) of this section shall be valid until June 30, 2021. For purposes of this section, "concentration in early childhood education" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

Approved June 13, 2017